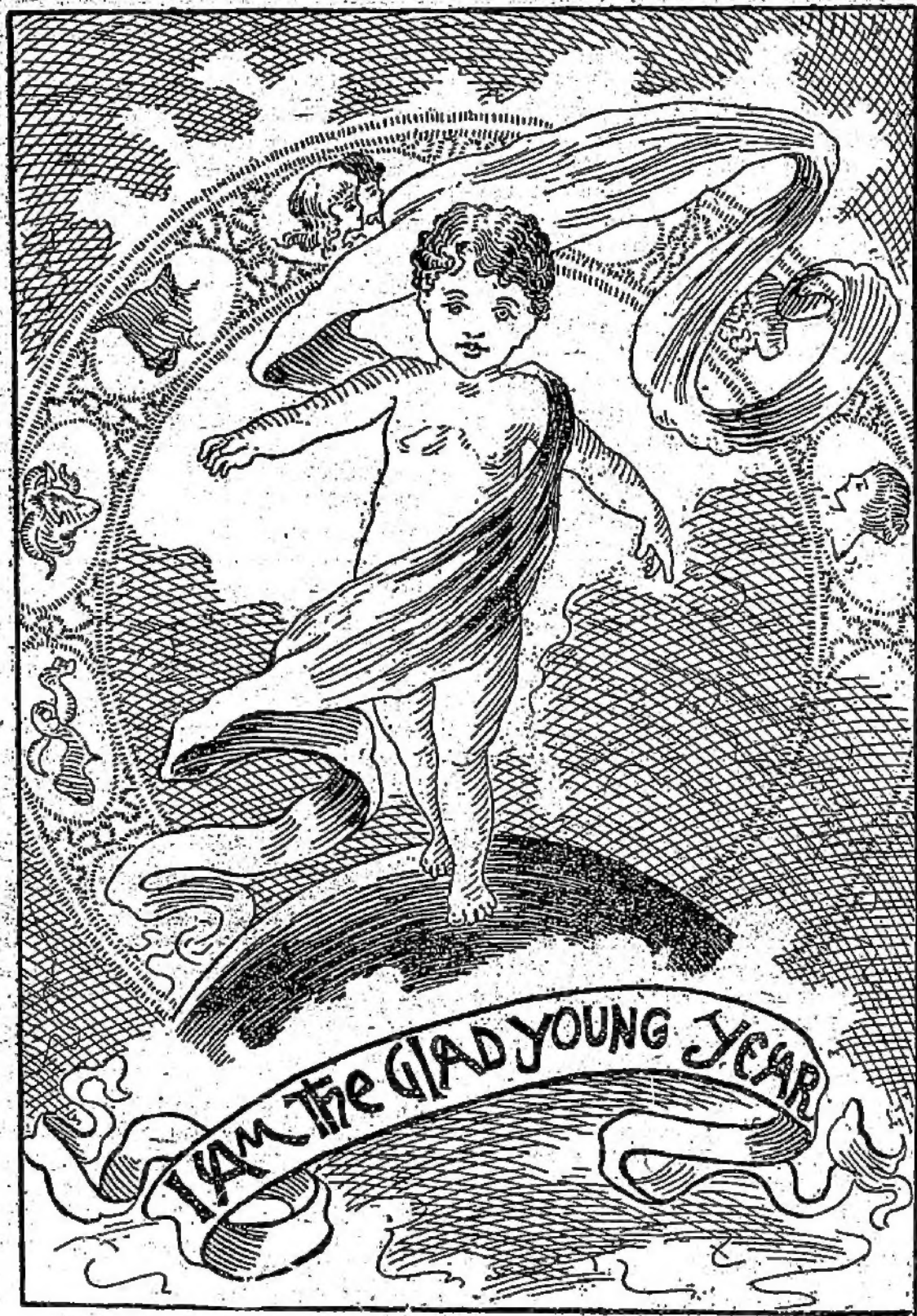


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The Little New Year

Oh the little New Year had a cradle all white!
And the wind tried to rock it with roar and with might,
And the clouds gathered near a tight curtain to keep,
While the snowbirds flew downward to sing him to sleep.

But the wind blew the New Year far out of his berth,
And chased him, and followed him over the earth;
And then, when the wind fell, all tired, away,
The New Year stood where he was; he'd come to stay!

He grew high as the heavens and broad as the land;
And scattered rich gifts from his great right hand;
In his left hand were troubles, but mixed with good things,
For trouble most always some good with it brings.

He strode o'er the earth, at the beckon of spring,
And afterwards saw all that summer could bring;

But when the sweet dreamland of autumn was past,
He turned him toward home, toward his cradle at last,

And there, while he watched, the big wind tossed about
Another young New Year, as strong and as stout,
Who swiftly passed on, just as he had before;
And our friend went his way, and we saw him no more.

I wonder if New Years are messenger boys
Whom God sends to bring us our work and our joys?
Why then—we must look out for every good thing,
And see what this New Year for us has to bring!
—Mayflower.

The Stranger At the Gate.

'When one by one the stately, silent years
Glide like pale ghosts beyond our yearning sight;
Vainly we stretch our arms to stay their flight,
So soon, so swift, they pass to endless night!
We hardly learn to name them, to praise them or to blame them.
To know their shadowy faces, e'er we see their empty places.'

True, very true! We scarcely accustom ourselves to getting the right figure at the end of the current year of our Lord, when lo! it must be changed again! And so hurried are the events of the passing year in this age of rush and activity that it is plain prose fact 'we hardly learn to name them, to praise them or to blame them, to know their shadowy faces, e'er we see their empty places!' This means a very great deal for every earnest, thinking man and woman. We all know the simple fact that on every first day of January the last figure on the date of the calendar for the year has advanced. There is no retrograde movement, no going back, never the standing still of that last figure, never a smaller numeral except when at the end of each decade it begins with zero again, but with the significant advance of a figure on the tens instead of the units. So, as they do not return, these fleet-footed years that are speeding away

'As silent and swift as a weaver's thread,
Or an arrow's flying gleam,
As soft as the languorous breezes hid
That lift the willows' long golden lid,
And ripple the glassy stream,'

the question becomes, what shall we do with them?

If there were any such thing as retracing our steps, as retracting the error, recalling the sorrowful mistake, such extreme caution might not be needed as does exist all along the way. But because time is fleeting, because it is subject to no recall, and the past is irrevocable, humanity at large is far too feeble and faulty to trust to its own strength and guidance. And because action and duty become more hurried and decisive as we grow older, and life grows fuller of care and responsibility, how plain becomes the lesson that each day and each hour is a thing momentous because of what must be crowded into it. No wonder Whittier writes:

'The Present, the Present is all thou hast
For thy sure possessing;
Like the patriarch's angel, hold it fast
Till it give its blessing.'

Then we need not fear to let the present step into the past, when we feel that it goes with a blessing. There is no bitterer sting than conscience can inflict when, communing with one's own heart, the deeds of the past point an accusing, disturbing finger. The time to prevent all such trying reminders is now, at the present moment, at each moment as it flies. Some fault was found with a noted evangelist of late because he spent so much time in striving to convince Christians that the lack of a revival was due largely to the unfaithfulness of church members, those who had fairly enrolled themselves as the followers of Christ. Yet the evangelist

was right. Christians are attaching less and less importance, it is to be greatly feared, to the need of common, constant, every-day religion and practice. There is a continual letting down of the bars—always sufficiently dimly discerned—which separate the Christian from mere followers of mammon.

What think you, my brother, my sister, would be the result if every church member in our land to-day should resolve, and act up to the resolve, to shape words, conduct and every-day life the coming year on a plane in perfect keeping with a sincere Christian's line of life? Ah, it would be a difficult thing for many of us! Self would have to be suppressed, inclination thwarted, the worldliness within us crushed out.

But looking backward when the fresh, hopeful new year should have become old, would not all heaven rejoice at the result? We sing 'Nearer, my God, to thee,' then go about our several duties, letting pride, ambition, and in too many cases mere follies, fill up the golden present. Turn about! Try faithful service, unswerving fealty to the Master who has a right to claim all this at our hands.

When in the Lord's parable the citizens said of the nobleman, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' they said virtually what in our hearts we say in refusing to let strictly Christian principles dominate our daily lives. Yet the yoke is easy and the burden light. It is only unfaithfulness that feels, and frets over, and struggles against, so dear a bond. Try serving this dear Protector in all faithfulness, and this new year will help us not only to keep in safe and pleasant paths ourselves, but we may have, in fact we shall have it in our power, to help others up toward the Kingdom of God.

'New year, what blessing bringest thou?

Waiting in silent awe I bow

To hear the answer given.'

If through the days approaching night

Thou liv'st with singleness of eye, and purpose strong for right,

Then thou shalt find a blessing sweet
Whilst sitting at the Master's feet, and learning of His might.

'To weary ones who o'er the earth in sin
and sadness roam,—

Bid them return to Christ, their Lord,
Bid them accept His blessed word, bid them come home.'

—'Christian Work.'

Open the Home.

An army of young men, an increasing number of young women, leave the farm and the village home and begin to make their way in the city. Of the wisdom or unwisdom of such a choice, nothing need here be said. If some good angel could have whispered to them years ago that life may be just as full, just as prosperous, just as happy, in the country as in the town it might have been better for many of them. But now the choice has been made, and the young people are in the city to stay. A long, weary pull against wind and tide awaits them. They need all their strength for the daily toil. Yet for most of them no evening fireside glows forth a welcome; nobody cares when they leave in the morning or when they come back at night; nobody is interested to hear of their joys or their sorrows. Their only regular visitors bring bills; their one unfailing friend is the postman.

Much has been said of the excellent resolutions of our city churches to make strangers and sojourners feel 'at home' among them. Few are the pastors who do not desire honestly and strongly that these reso-

lutions might be carried out. When they see a plainly dressed young man enter and leave the room without a greeting save from the usher, they feel that something is wrong; and perhaps there is a little shaking up, a few words of kindly admonition to the members at an evening meeting, a new committee appointed or a sociable planned. And the members also usually wish to do the right thing by the 'boarding-house people;' at least in theory they do. But when it comes to facts, one cannot be blind to the tremendous gulf between the ideal and the reality. Even that fraction of the 'shut-outs' who are consistent and persistent church goers, being such from principle and habit as well as from preference, are often but coolly received by well-meaning members of the church. And the great majority, who visit a church rarely or never, but spend their Sundays on a wheel—anything for companionship—or reading Sunday papers, are as truly shut out of the great commonwealth of Christian homes as if lock and bolt barred their access.

Well, someone may say, is it not largely their own fault? When Christian people so cordially invite them to prayer-meeting and Sunday-school and the so-called 'church sociable,' who is to blame if they lack social pleasures? Now, take the man or woman who asks that question and set him or her down in a ten by twelve fourth story room, with no acquaintance in the house, no spare money for books or magazines or concerts, no recreation in short save a walk around the block; and after six months, inquire whether the Sunday morning sermon and the mid-week prayer-meeting furnish adequate provision for the social nature. The trouble with many of us is that we do not know what it is to be alone like that.—Standard.

'Rejoice In the Lord Always.'

We cannot rejoice with perfect satisfaction in ourselves or in creatures; but the Lord is perfect, and we can always rejoice in him. I have just been led to add a joyous word to six of the names of the Lord that we continually employ; each word beginning with the same letter that the name begins with: and I pass on these words with the desire to help others to obey the command quoted above from Phil. iv., 4, that whenever either of the names may be mentioned or thought of there may be delight produced thereby.

Jesus. This name should cause joy, because he saves us from our sins.

Christ, cheerfulness, for we have all good given to us in him.

Father, felicity, for he has made all believers in Christ one with himself.

Holy Spirit, happy song, for he makes real to us all that gives perfect satisfaction.

God, gladness, for he is the true One in whom we have every blessing forever.

Lord, laughter, for he does what is best for us, and in us, and by us, which we enjoy in believing, and want no more.

Let each letter of this last name help to show what the Lord is to his believing people:

L—Life, Light, Love and their Liberty.

O—Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and the Opener of their way.

R—Righteousness, Reigning One, their Redeemer.

D—Delight of delights.

To have this perfect delight there must always be perfect submission; yes, 'perfect submission, perfect delight'—G. K. in 'Preachers' Magazine.'

'He Goeth Before Them.'

(Alice Jane Muirhead in 'Light in the Home.')

'I was in sore trouble,' relates a now famous German preacher; 'my young wife lay dying, and to this heavy sorrow was added the trial of deep poverty. Out of my small stipend I had been called to relieve those even more sorely straitened, and my purse was empty.'

'Dear husband,' my sick wife said to me, one Saturday evening, 'the butcher is coming presently; he has not been paid for several months, but I promised him he should receive his money to-day.'

Her words cut me to the heart; but I could not distress the invalid, so I answered calmly—

'Let the man be sent to me.'

And then I went to my room and 'shut to the door.' Passionately I wrestled with God in prayer, pleading that I must renounce the preaching of his Gospel if he suffered me thus to be put to shame. Our creditor was a Roman Catholic, and would at once prosecute me, or at least denounce me on every side as dishonest. How could I again appear in the pulpit?

Soon I heard a heavy step on the stairs. Trembling with anxiety, I went to the door, to find it was—the postman! He gave me a letter with five seals, containing, as I found, fifty dollar notes; twenty-five were what I needed for the butcher, who came a few moments later.

The envelope bore the name of the sender—a manufacturer in a distant city and quite unknown to me. At first I feared some mistake, and opened with a shaking hand the letter accompanying the money, which set my doubts at rest.

But how came a stranger to send me this sum, when God only knew my need?

The writer explained that during a walking tour he had been detained by bad weather in a country inn, and had asked the landlord for something to read. The latter gave him some numbers of a magazine I had been editing.

An article of mine had so impressed the traveller that he had it printed as a tract, many thousand copies of which had been circulated unknown to me. On settling accounts with his printer, he found fifty dollars to his credit. 'To whom does this belong?' he asked himself. 'Surely to the author of the article, to whom I owe an apology for using his property without leave.'

Thus did God provide that the money was posted to me even before I prayed—ay, before I knew how sorely it was needed. This was verily the richest literary remuneration I ever received, for it bore with it a mighty strengthening of my feeble faith.

We call such an incident as this a remarkable answer to prayer. It is remarkable in that it is worthy to be noted and to praise God for; but it is not remarkable that he should answer prayer. It would be far more remarkable if he did not answer prayer, since he has told us this in his Word: 'All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'

Why is it, then, that we do not receive every day as striking answers to our prayers, seeing that God is both able and willing, and has pledged his word to answer prayer? Is it not because of our want of faith? Let us lay stress on that word 'believing.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'

Since he says according to your faith be it done unto you, may we not well cry to the Lord, 'Increase our faith?'

BOYS AND GIRLS

Their New Year's Present.

(By Margaret Johnson.)

On either side of the path through the woods the snow lay, white and unbroken. The trees arched overhead, their myriad twigs tracing an intricate pattern upon the cloudless blue of the sky. Elsa did not lift her eyes to see this beauty. Her thoughts were busy and troubled, and she walked with drooping head. Such a little thing it was to worry over! So many girls would never give it a thought! She was too honest, too conscientious. Her examination paper had been perfect but for that one question; and it was quite by accident

'Lena,' it wailed, 'it iss my turn! You haf keep it too long, Lena!'

Looking down she saw a tiny boy, whose round blue eyes, peering from the folds of a great comforter, gazed tearfully at a girl, not much larger than himself, clad in a dingy red jacket and cap.

'What is the matter?' asked Elsa, kindly.

'It iss the skate, Fraulein,' said Lena, confidently. She had seen the young lady before, and knew the stately house on the avenue where she lived.

'Ve haf only von, und ve takes turns to wear it. Yacob cries because he iss so little.'

laboring under obvious difficulties, as long as Elsa's amused eyes could follow them.

If Lena had been presented with a pair of wings she could not have been more wonderfully grateful. Up and down, back and forth she skimmed, untiring. Little Yacob grew weary and went home, his one skate hugged lovingly to his bosom. The crowd thinned on the pond. The air grew colder, and the dull red sunset burned behind the trees.

Then with a sudden pang Lena realized that there was an end to her joy. The skates were not hers. She would never have them again. She looked around for the tall figure of the girl who had played the good fairy to her. There she was, far away at the other end of the pond. Lena took off the skates and started across with them sorrowfully.

Midway over, she stopped. A sudden temptation had taken possession of her. What if she should keep the skates? Instantly it seemed to her as if she must have them. She did not stop to think, but gave one quick glance about her. Elsa was talking with some friends far away. No one was looking. No one would know. She turned and ran to the shore, and dashed into the woods, running with all her might, filled with a fearful joy, toward the little house where she and Yacob lived, across the railway track.

It was a long way. The winter day came to a sudden close, and it grew dark early in those still woods. Lena began to be oppressed by the loneliness and gloom about her. She scarcely understood the misery that crept over her as she ran. Still she went on as in a dream. Not until she was nearly home did conscience fairly awake in her sturdy little bosom, and smite her with sudden woe. What had she done! What was she—a thief! She stood still. Before her shone the lighted window of her home. Behind her stretched the shadowy woods, gloomy with gathering darkness. She was chilled and weary. Her feet were heavy, and her hands ached. The tears came slowly and fell over her cold cheeks. A sob rose in her throat. She turned and started back through the woods.

In the big armchair before the library grate Elsa sat that evening, gazing listlessly into the fire. Her brow was clouded, and her heart full of bitter and troubled thoughts. To think that even the little child whom she had trusted, who looked so innocent and honest, should have betrayed her confidence! There was no truth, no honesty, then, in the world. Why should she strain a point to be true to an over-fine sense of honor? What did it matter, after all? No, she would not tell Miss Mathews about that history question.

The door-bell rang loudly and suddenly. The servant hastened to the door; but almost before she could open it, a little figure half-ran, half-tumbled over the threshold, still clinging desperately with benumbed hands to something shining held against its breast.

'Lena!' cried Elsa, springing up.

'O Fraulein!' cried the child, holding out the skates with a great sob. 'I haf bring them back. I want them, oh! so much. I haf think I will keep them. But I cannot. Und it vas so cold, und so far, und I haf lose my way! But I'm not a thief, Fraulein, und I haf bring them back!'

The quick tears sprang to Elsa's eyes. She stooped and caught the little trembling figure in her arms.

'Lena!' she cried. 'You dear child! You brave, honest little soul! Did you come all



'FRAULIEN, I HAF BRING THEM BACK.'

that she had opened her history, to get a paper which lay there, just at the page which answered that troublesome question. Was it her duty to tell Miss Matthews about that, and lose the perfect mark she was so anxious for?

A sound of voices came floating through the frosty air; a confused, joyous murmur, mingled with the keen, silvery ringing of steel upon ice. She was nearing the pond. Following a bend in the path she came full upon it—a brilliant sight; the sparkling sheet of ice, covered with gay figures, darting, skimming, and swaying, in the sunshine. Elsa put on her skates and joined the flying throng; but she was in no mood for pleasure, and presently was standing again on the shore, gazing with absent eyes at the merry scene. She was roused by the sound of a plaintive voice near by.

'But you can't do anything with one skate,' cried Elsa.

'O ja, Fraulein,' said the child. 'You can skate fery well, mit von foot to slide, and von to push.'

Elsa was seized with a sudden impulse.

'Do you think you can wear my skates, Lena?' she asked; and taking the dainty, shining skates from her own feet, Elsa knelt down and buckled them on over Lena's stout shoes.

'Now go, and let me see you try them,' she said. 'Yacob can have the odd one; and bring them back to me when you are tired.'

She watched the child start off, and saw that she could really skate very well. The dingy red jacket darted in and out among the crowd, and little Yacob came after,

the way back through those lonely woods to bring them? This settles it! I shall go and tell Miss Mathews about that question the first thing to-morrow morning. Come here to the fire and get warm, scrutinizing the odd little figure in the dingy red jacket and cap, who, breathless and half-frozen, was yet meaning to 'be honest.' 'Peter, the coachman, shall take you home; and if you and little Jacob don't have a whole pair of skates between you for New Year's presents, my name is not Elsa Gordon, and I am an ungrateful girl for the best lesson I ever learned!'—'Morning Star.'

An Unselfish Surrender.

(By Mrs. F. M. Howard, in the 'Standard'.)

There was quite a crowd at the station when the afternoon train came in. The usual number of depot loungers, several with fishing rods and baskets, going off for recreation, a carriage or two besides the time-honored bus, which had carried passengers to and fro in Brookville until its cushions were worn bare, and its joints were creaky with age.

At last the train came around the curve, and every eye was turned expectantly toward it.

Two young girls alighted, both tall, with bright, animated faces, in spite of the hot and dusty day, for this was home, and friends were waiting to greet them. One, Isabelle Horton, was borne off to the finest of the waiting carriages amidst a stream of eager chatter; the other put her hand within the arm of a tired, faded-looking woman, several inches taller than herself, saying cheerfully, 'We will be extravagant for once, mamma, and send the parcels up in the dray. They are too heavy to carry.'

'I'm so proud of you, Nellie,' said the mother, when they had cleared the busier streets, and were going along the narrow sidewalk which, bordered by a fringe of thrifty weeds, led to their cottage home.

'Not so proud as I am of you, dear mamma,' replied Nellie Morris, with a loving squeeze of the arm she held. 'To think how you've worked and sacrificed to give me the chance I've had. But it is my turn now, and you shall rest while I earn the money.'

Such a tiny home as it was which they entered, but neat as ever busy hands could keep it. The old piano in the corner of the little parlor was open to-day, though it had been shut for the six months past, except when the mother had dusted it with rigorous care. There was a bouquet upon it in an old-fashioned vase, an awkward bouquet, with little harmony of color, but it looked beautiful to the daughter's loving eyes, for she knew that every blossom had been touched with a tender thought of her home-coming.

'Home, home, sweet, sweet home, there's no place like home,' she hummed as she went into the little bedroom to make ready for the early tea, which was even now spread in the small dining-room which joined the parlor.

In the other home, Isabelle Horton was giving an animated description of the graduating exercises, which, through unforeseen circumstances, none of the family had been able to attend.

'And now you shall see that I am not ungrateful, papa, for the money you have spent on my musical education,' she concluded, turning towards her father with a smile. 'I'm going to work this very week to secure pupils.'

'I think you will have no difficulty in securing a class if you wish it,' said her mother, a gentle lady with soft blue eyes, and a tender smile which illuminated her face like sunlight.

Isabelle had her father's height of figure and strong, brilliant face. 'Several have asked me if you were going to teach.'

'Of course I'm going to teach. What other use could I make of my music? Oh, I assure you I'm a progressive young woman. One gets so many new ideas, going away from home, and one of them is a horror of idleness. Prof. McKee could tell you how industrious I have been. By the way, Nellie Morris came in on my train. She has her diploma too, and she seemed so happy. Mrs. Morris was there to meet her.'

'A most estimable woman,' Judge Horton remarked, with emphasis. 'Poor, and to an extent uncultivated, but good as gold. I have no doubt she has toiled hard to help Nellie through school.'

'Indeed she has,' Mrs. Horton added. 'She has denied herself every luxury, even necessities, to accomplish this desire of her heart for Nellie. Mrs. Graham, her neighbor, told me the story, which was really pathetic. I have given her all my fine ironing to do since. She does it beautifully.'

'I wonder if Nellie will teach,' Isabelle said with languid interest.

'She expects to. Mrs. Graham said that her little girl was going to take lessons from her.'

'Well, I hope she'll prosper, I'm sure.' Any subject outside of Isabelle's plans and achievements had its lack of interest for the time, and as one of her brothers asked for music, the fine piano was opened, and Nellie was forgotten as the skillful fingers drew bewitching melodies from the keys.

'I shall invest my first earnings in an exchange of pianos,' Isabelle whirled around on her piano stool after a brilliant sonata. 'I played on one worth \$1,000 at the closing concert, and it spoiled me for a cheaper instrument.'

'You thought this was pretty fine before you went away, Sis,' remarked her brother. 'It seems to me \$1,000 is a pretty progressive sum to put into music alone. I wanted to swap wheels the other day with only \$50 to boot, but father wouldn't let me.'

'But I shall earn my own money, you see, there's the difference,' replied Isabelle, somewhat loftily. 'An expert in any branch of business needs the best tools to work with.'

The Hortons, while not among the very wealthy class, were still very far above want. Judge Horton's profession brought in an ample income for the needs of their rather quiet life, in the small town which they preferred to the city near by.

Their home was the finest in Brockville, and plenty, with freedom from the sordid cares which beset narrower lives, was there a constant guest.

Social position, too, was assured, but when Isabelle went out with her pretty business-like manner, to solicit pupils she found the response even more ready than she had expected.

True, a very few demurred. They had engaged lessons of Nellie Morris, they said, apologetically, and Isabelle took the demur with becoming good nature.

'Nellie is a good girl,' she said, patronizingly. 'Of course I think my method superior to hers, but she will do nicely with beginners, no doubt.'

Her heart gave an admonitory twinge as she said this, for really she had no desire to injure Nellie's prospects in the least, and she well knew that though the school that Nellie had attended was not so high-priced as her own, the methods taught were fully as good and the instruction as thorough.

Meantime, the weeks were passing anxiously with Nellie Morris.

She came in from her canvass of the village day after day, with a weary, discourag-

ed face, and one evening she laid her head, throbbing with pain, on her mother's lap, and burst into tears.

'It's of no use, mamma,' she sobbed. 'Isabelle Horton is getting all the class I had hoped to have. People think it is a distinction to have Judge Horton's daughter to instruct them, and those whom I have depended upon as almost certain pupils have gone to her. If she was poor and needed the money as I do, I wouldn't mind it so much, but it does seem cruel.'

'Never mind, dear.' The toil-hardened hand of her mother smoothed the hot forehead, lovingly. 'You have a few scholars, and with my earnings we will get along nicely. I am so glad we are not in debt.'

'But I am in debt, mamma. I owe you everything, and I cannot bear to see you toiling as you have done. If I cannot succeed here I must go away.'

'Don't be hasty, dear child. We have our home here, and our friends. Perhaps Isabelle will weary of being confined to the routine of teaching. Some way will open for us if we do our best with patience.'

There was an unseen auditor to this conversation, Isabelle herself, with a package of fine laces which required skilful laundering. She tapped at the outer door but no one came, and stepping into the little parlor, she was an unintentional listener. A red flush crept slowly over her bright, ambitious face, as she comprehended what she had heard, and turning softly, she slipped out into the twilight again, a troubled look upon her face as she hastened home.

'What shall I do, mother?' she asked, as almost in tears, she related her story. 'I really had no idea that my success meant her failure.'

'I suppose that is the case in nearly every venture,' Mrs. Horton replied, with gravity, in her sweet, kind face. 'One's success is another's failure, but in this case the question is which shall give up her opportunity. It is a pleasure to us to supply your every need and every reasonable desire. While I sympathize, to a degree, with your laudable ambition to be independent, still, dear, is it just for you to occupy the field to the exclusion of one to whom success is an absolute necessity?'

'No, it isn't right, mother,' Isabelle replied slowly, 'but what can I do? How can I remain idle?'

'You will not. There is plenty to do in our home life. We need you, daughter. I've missed you more than I can tell, the boys have needed your refining influence, and father has pined for the open piano. We really need a daughter far more than we need a wage-earner, my dear.'

Isabelle threw her arms around her mother's neck. There was a wistful appeal in her voice which aroused all her tenderness.

'Why haven't you told me so before, mother, when I was planning to spend the greater part of my time away from home?'

'I did not wish to be selfish, dear. I saw your heart was fixed on making a career for yourself like other women of the day, but the subject has troubled me. This subject, I mean, of girls who have good homes and an ample support, taking the places of those who are in actual need of work. Jennie Cassell has taken a place as first saleswoman in her uncle's store. She isn't accurate, it is never safe to accept a bill of hers without looking it over. She is not over-pleasant with customers; not nearly so well qualified for the position as Mary Deering, who would otherwise have had it.'

'It is too bad!' Isabelle exclaimed. 'Mary supports an invalid mother and sister, while Jennie will only have a few more laces and gowns than she would at home.'

'Her mother needs her at home, too. Mrs.

Cassell always looks tired. I do think, my dear, that one of the needs of homes in this day is daughters. Gentle, unselfish, loving daughters, who are willing to make the home a place of sunshine and rest for the mothers, who have borne the heat and burden of the day in bringing them up to an age of usefulness.

'One home, at least, shall have one,' Isabelle said, with an air of determination, 'and if I am tempted to mourn for my elegant piano or other luxuries,' which I do not need, I will compose a variation on "Home, sweet Home," as a reminder of my duty.'

Nellie came to the door next morning when Isabelle, the bundle of laces in her hand, tapped again at the door. There was an involuntary restraint in her manner as she invited the daughter of Judge Horton into the shabby little parlor, and they met as rivals rather than as friends.

It was not easy for Isabelle to broach the subject which she had come to discuss, but she was a brave girl, and in the hour's talk which followed, the two became better acquainted than they had ever been before.

Nellie went out into the kitchen where her mother was ironing, after Isabelle was gone, her face bright with happiness.

'Oh mamma, just listen! Isabelle has decided not to teach after all, and she says she will do her best to transfer all her class to me. Isn't it lovely?'

'Why, yes, child. I'm dreadfully glad. You didn't tell her how you felt, did you?' The mother's honest pride would have rebelled against the act as a charity.

'Not until after she had told me her decision. She was so nice and kind that it came out then; almost before I knew it. She is just lovely, mamma. I never have known her before.'

'I told you some way would open up for us Nellie,' the tired mother replied, looking up at her tall daughter with happy eyes; but she never knew just how the way had opened.

It was better that she did not.

The New Year's Gift.

(E. A. Knight in 'Welcome'.)

'What will it bring me, this blithe New Year
Whose footsteps now we can almost hear?'
'Twas thus I mused in the firelight glow
Of a New Year's eve not long ago.

I fell to wishing a thousand things
(For hope, like a bird, will use its wings),
While night wrapped round me its robe of gloom
And a hush crept over the silent room.

The New Year, then, with its garments white,
Seemed to take form to my mortal sight;
He smiled a greeting in tones of song,
And threw me a gift as he passed along.

A necklet of pearls it seemed to be.
I said, 'Is this priceless gift for me?'
The answer came, 'It is thine to-day;
To-morrow a gem will have passed away.'

Twelve large round pearls formed the top-
most row;
Pendent from these were fifty or so;
Again, like a fringe, did hundreds fall,
And clasp of gold completed all.

I closed the clasp with a sudden snap,
When, lo! I woke from a lonely nap;
The bells rang out o'er my startled ear
Their welcoming peal to the new-born year.

I saw no chain with its pearly gleam,
But thought that the voice in my New Year
dream
Sounded e'en then in the midnight chime,
'What gift is more priceless than precious
time?'

'Twelve months I bring thee; their weeks
and days
Are thine to use to thy Maker's praise.
Value them highly; they will not stay;
But now, even now, do they pass away.'

Melinda's Needles.

(By Jennie M. Bingham, in 'The Christian Endeavor World'.)

Mrs. Melinda Barnum lighted her candle and sat down to work on her accounts. She always drew down the curtain and fastened the door before she sat down to her accounts.

It was her weekly recreation. She would not own that she enjoyed it better than going to church. She always waived the comparison when it suggested itself to her. Besides she was very conscientious about church-going. She was glad salvation was free, and the thing she particularly disliked was a collection. Do not think that she never gave anything for the support of the gospel. She put in a contribution every week so quietly that the left hand never knew what the right hand was about, and neither would have worked long to count it.

There was a knock at the door, and Mary Clarke looked in.

'Good evening Melinda, I thought I'd come and sit a few minutes with you.'

Mrs. Melinda was not very cordial. She remembered that Mary Clarke was always working for the Church, and, when she was seen flying around the streets, it meant that a missionary collection was being taken, or members were being drummed up for a meeting, or poor children were about to be clothed.

Mary seated herself in the high-backed kitchen chair, and inquired about Melinda's cough. This was a subject that interested Melinda always, and she discussed it in all its phases and characteristics. Mary next inquired about the cat, which was sleeping lazily by the stove. On this subject Melinda grew almost eloquent. It was not strange, as Dixey was her only companion.

Then Mary Clark led the way to speak of the subject that was on her heart—a missionary-box that was going to India. It was going to a missionary who had taken into her orphanage two hundred famine orphans, who sorely needed everything in the way of supplies which could be picked up.

Mary Clark told in her warm-hearted, enthusiastic way of the little children starving in the streets of all that great empire, of the missionaries who tenderly cared for them, and had saved to mission schools and to future missionary service thousands of these waifs. She said: 'I know, Melinda, that you have never felt able to join our society or to give money; but I thought perhaps you might give five yards of cotton cloth, which will clothe one of these children a year, or possibly several yards; could you?'

'You know how hard the times are, Mary Clarke, and how many folks come begging.'

Mary nodded her head. She knew that very few people begged from Melinda, because it was lost labor. She answered: 'O Melinda, the hard times are over now, and in this village we really knew very little about hard times. Haven't you really made as much these few years as usual? We have.'

Melinda put out her hand in a deprecating way, and looked pained. She shook her head with a decided negative. Here Mary produced a picture of a group of pinched, starving, famine children, which she held up without note or comment.

It happened that Melinda really cared very much for Mary Clark's opinion—as much as she could for anyone. She was not willing to give; yet she found it uncommonly hard to refuse that bright, happy, generous-hearted girl. She spoke at length.

'Mary, I'll send you something over to the church to put in the box. Is that agreeable?'

'O thank you! How nice!' and Mary arose to go, said 'Good night,' and hurried out

along the street, feeling in high feather. Melinda had never given anything to missions before. Mary was sure that this gift would open her heart. She had to stop at the parsonage and tell the minister's wife, and remind her how little faith she had had in the undertaking.

After Mary had gone, Melinda went to her old-fashioned chest of drawers, and dived down under the bundles of cloth bought at sales when things were cheap. She went way down under these bundles until in the corner she came on a paper of needles.

She drew it out carefully, and opened the paper. It was full of needles. She had been collecting them all her life. They were the very fine ones that occasionally come in an assorted paper, and need to be threaded under a microscope. Mingled with them were some invalid members, some headless needles on one side, offset by some pointless needles on the other.

Melinda shut up the paper, and reminded herself that the paper looked as new and good and respectable as if it were full of honest, serviceable needles.

In justice to Melinda it should be said that she did not mean to cheat the Lord or any of his children. The demon of greed had so gradually come in to possess her soul that she had not recognized its sovereignty.

She did, however, feel a little uncomfortable about this gift. How could she get it into the box without being seen? She resolved to run down before prayer-meeting, and, while the sexton was tending the fire, she would tuck her gift into the box.

But the minister's wife was there before her, putting the last offerings in the box, which a missionary was to call for the next day. Melinda had to lay down her paper of needles when the sweet face of the minister's wife was looking at her, and somehow it was not easy work. The minister's wife spoke up so pleasantly.

'A paper of needles! Just what we want for this box. You know the little children will be taught to sew and mend, and needles are so expensive there. Thank you, Mrs. Barnum.'

Melinda mumbled something down in her throat, and turned away. She saw the paper of needles tucked in with the thread. She felt wretchedly uneasy about it.

The minister's wife thought that the unusual sensation of giving was affecting her.

Melinda hurried out toward home. She even spoke crossly to Dixey, and made him move out of his cosy corner, while she proceeded to poke the fire.

'Wish't I hadn't seen that picture,' she muttered. 'I don't know why Mary Clarke has to bring such things for me to see when she knows I ain't—able—to give.' The last words faltered on her lips. She knew they were not true.

'Anyway I don't feel able,' she added. She laid her head back on the cushion of her Boston rocker, and wished she could forget that picture and Mary Clarke and the box and everything else disagreeable.

The wind was rising and blowing against her little house with a dull roar. She closed her eyes to get rested.

She felt that she was being carried along, swiftly on the wings of the wind, and that her eyes were looking on scenes familiar and yet new. She was on some height overlooking a picture like that one on the walls of her own little home.

It was a picture of the Celestial City as Bunyan told of it, and as some devout and simple-hearted artist had drawn it. It was the only picture on the walls of her little parlor, and it had hung there several years. The merit of the picture lay in its indistinctness. There was the outline of domes and

palaces and the suggestion of beautiful sights, but it all faded away into the dimness of illimitable distance.

Melinda had never looked at the picture with other than devout feelings. It stood for all she thought and planned concerning heaven.

Here she was at last, right at the gate of the city, looking out on the very vision she had cherished. Even the atmosphere was full of sweetness and blessing. Had she really come to the opening of a new life? She thought regretfully of her bank account and her stocks, which were paying so well, and of her acres, well-tilled and fruitful. What would become of them now? How poor she was—pitifully poor, standing at the gate of heaven!

Everything she owned and had treasured so carefully had no place in that blessed country to which she had come. If only she had laid up some treasure here!

A sound of singing broke the silence. Little children were marching in, singing as they went, their faces beautiful with immortal youth. Perhaps these were famine children from India. She tried to step in line and follow them, but something weighted her down. She could not stir a foot toward the Celestial City's gate; and, as she tried again, with an awful fear tugging at her heart, above the singing rose the sound of a voice, a sad voice, saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not to me." And the gate shut with a ponderous boom.

She jumped up, trembling with excitement. There was a flickering candle, and Dixsy stretching by the stove. The cellar door had slammed shut. She was not at the gate of the Celestial City, but in her own little kitchen. But she did not feel as if she were the same woman that had fallen asleep. She ran to the chest of drawers, and pulled out fifteen yards of cotton cloth, and some spools of thread, and a paper of needles. She went back to her chair, and picked up Dixsy.

"Dixsy," she said, "the devil tells me that this is too much for me to give, and that, likely as not the box won't hold it; but I won't listen to it. O Dixsy," and a solemn light came into her face, "it was such a lovely place, so full of music and everything beautiful; but I was shut out! How could it be only just a common ordinary dream? It wasn't, Dixsy, and you needn't say it was. It was those needles a-pricking my conscience."

The Patch of Blue Sky.

(Mrs. M. A. A. Stiles in 'Child's Paper'.)

Ruth Henderson was a silent, imaginative child. Her father was one of the first pioneers who settled in Northern Michigan during those early days when that region was literally a howling wilderness: for savage grey wolves inhabited those primeval forests in vast numbers and preyed upon life unmercifully.

In a week after their arrival at the spot they had pre-empted, Mr. Henderson and his two sons by their united efforts had erected a log-house for the family and log out-houses for the cattle, for so fierce and hungry were the wolves that it was necessary for the pioneer to house his cattle every night to preserve their life.

In a few years they had attracted a settlement of neighbors who were scattered within a range of two or three miles.

The families were for the most part strangers to each other when they immigrated, coming from different parts of the country, but the common trials of hardship and privation drew them together in the closest sympathy.

As the immigrants frequently gathered

at night around the father's fireside and related their wild experiences, no one ever surmised that Ruth, sitting so silently with her knitting, was fairly quaking with fear and nervous dread. On the contrary, they called her the bravest girl in the settlement, a veritable little 'Red Ridinghood.'

Having earned the reputation of being fearless, the child dared not confess when her courage at times utterly failed; but continued by sheer force of will to fulfil the expectations of other people.

And so it happened one short day in February, a neighbor called at the door of Mr. Henderson's house to say that Mrs. Holmes was ill in bed, that Mr. Holmes was going to the mill, and wished Mrs. Henderson to stay with her during his absence.

"Ruth and I will be glad to go," Mrs. Henderson responded heartily.

They started almost immediately, following the Indian trail after they left their own clearing, that led along to their nearest neighbor's, only a mile and a half away.

When they approached a large cedar swamp, Ruth remarked:

"This is the place they call Wolf's Run, mother."

"Yes, my child; in cold weather they say the wolves run into these woody places for shelter, but we shall not see any in the daytime."

Ruth was not altogether assured. She peered furtively through the underbrush and fancied several times that she saw a wolf watching near, but they reached the Holmes' clearing safely without hearing so much as a howl from a distant wolf.

Mrs. Henderson and Ruth were busily engaged for several hours caring for the comfort of the sick neighbor, until the mother felt obliged to return to her own home.

"I will leave Ruth to stay with you until your folks come home," said Mrs. Henderson, as she prepared to go.

"They've been gone since morning, and I reckon they'll soon come along now," replied Mrs. Holmes, "though if Ruth weren't so courageous I wouldn't want her to stay to go home alone," she added.

It was quite four o'clock before Mr. Holmes and his boys came home. Then there was the ox-cart to unload and much to be done outside of the house. They did not come in to relieve Ruth, though the twilight was deepening rapidly, so she waited patiently for permission to go, trembling with nervous anxiety as to how she should reach home.

The boys, she thought, would surely offer to go with her through 'Wolf's Run' when they came in; then she could quickly fly over her father's clearing alone. She could not ask them to go with her and confess her dreadful fear of the wolves. The moments passed like hours. Suddenly Mrs. Holmes spoke, "Come, Ruth, it's real late. Your mother will be getting worried. You ought to have gone home long ago. Fly, child, now before it gets any darker."

Ruth silently put on her red cloak and hood, glanced at the dark shadows outside, but said nothing. Her heart was beating violently at the prospect before her. The tears were in her eyes, but she did not look up as she bade Mrs. Holmes good-night, or her secret fear would have been revealed.

Ruth hastened on without faltering until she came to the dusky evergreens of the swamp. Then she halted. She could not summon the necessary courage to go through the swamp.

"Shall I go back and tell them I dare not go home alone? How Jack Holmes would laugh!"

She stood irresolute for several moments. She thought of her mother anxiously waiting her return; perhaps she would start out

alone to search for her and meet with the fate she dreaded for herself. This thought urged her on with all possible speed. She entered the shadow of the cedars.

Hark! she heard distinctly even now in the distance the weird cry of the wolf. It was a familiar sound to Ruth's ears. Ruth knew they were lurking near, that it needed only the sight of her to bring the whole pack together, but she did not falter now.

She sped along almost noiselessly still deeper into the evergreen shadows, faster now, for it was quite dark. She could not see the light at the other end of the trail.

She heard the wolves howling in the swamp. The child was paralyzed with fear. Her feet were powerless to go on. She clasped her hands in agony, her eyes unconsciously looking up heavenward.

Ah! there between the tops of the evergreens she saw a patch of blue sky!

"Why, God is there! He can save me! 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.'"

These assuring words flashed through her mind with a new meaning. She had learned the verse of Scripture that morning.

"God, save me!" Her lips moved, but made no sound. A soft blue light seemed to float down upon her from the blue sky above. Then the peace of a mind relieved from a fearful anxiety swept over the child's soul. Her hands dropped to her side. She glanced around; not a wolf was in sight.

"I thank thee, dear Father!" she said aloud, looking up again. It was the first sound she had uttered since she had entered the evergreen shades, and it gave her fresh courage. Her feet moved on at their usual pace, and she passed out of the cedar swamp fearlessly.

Half way across the clearing she saw her mother beckoning her to hasten.

"Oh, child," she cried, when Ruth was within hearing, "why did you stay so long? I've worried about you every moment since four o'clock. Father has just come, and says he never heard of the wolves being so bold in the daytime before. Why, they chased him home, though he fired at 'em right along. He says he killed ten. It's a miracle the swamp wasn't full of them. Didn't you feel scared any at all, Ruthie?" she asked, rather curiously.

"Yes, mother, I was frightened, but I got over it."

Ruth has children and grandchildren now. After relating this story to me the other day she added:

"Ever since that night when I was alone with the wolves in 'Wolf's Run,' the memory of the light of that patch of blue sky has never failed to comfort me in distress. Again again I have cried helplessly in sadness and sorrow with clasped hands and streaming eyes, 'Ah, there is yet left to me my patch of blue sky. God is there, God is here—a very present help in trouble.'"

New Year Thoughts.

(Lillian Grey in 'Golden Rule'.)

Let us walk softly, friend;
For strange paths lie before us, all untrod;
The New Year, spotless from the hand of God,

Is thine and mine, O friend!

Let us walk straightly, friend;
Forget the crooked paths behind us now,
Press on with steadier purpose on our brow,
To better deeds, O friend.

Let us walk gladly, friend;
Perchance some greater good than we have known
Is waiting for us, or some fair hope dawn
Shall yet return, O friend.

Let us walk humbly, friend;
Slight not the heart's-ease blooming round
our feet;
The laurel blossoms are not half so sweet,
Or lightly gathered, friend.

Let us walk kindly, friend;
We cannot tell how long this life shall last,
How soon these precious years be overpast;
Let love walk with us, friend.

Let us walk quickly, friend;
Work with our might while lasts our little stay,
And help some halting comrade on the way;
And may God guide us, friend.

Correspondence

A Happy New Year To All!

Dear Boys and Girls,—How I should like to write you each a personal letter, if I could. But it would be impossible, so you must each consider this your own letter from me. I want to ask you some questions after wishing you a very happy New Year.

What is this new year going to mean to you? How can you keep all those resolves you think you ought to make? You are a year older than you were last New Year's day—are you a year further on the way to God? Your body has been growing this year—has your soul been growing, too? You have been learning new lessons this year—have you been learning more about Jesus? It was said of our Lord that he 'increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.' My prayer for each one of you is that you may do the same.

If your body did not grow at all your parents would get very anxious, and perhaps take you to some great doctor to find out what was the matter with you. If your mind did not grow, if you did not get any wiser as the years went by, your parents and friends would be very anxious for you, and perhaps send you to some specially good school or get a very clever teacher for you. Our minds and our bodies are so important that they should be given every opportunity to develop well, for the glory of God. But the most important part of us is our soul. If your soul is not growing, there is something the matter with it. I want to take you to the Great Physician, the Lord Jesus. He will wash your sins away with his own precious blood and fill your soul with his life and love. He will also give you a Teacher, the Holy Spirit, who will teach you how to follow Jesus day by day, and to grow more and more like him.

How many will begin this beautiful New Year of 1899 by giving themselves to Jesus? Will you? Will you not write me a little letter telling me if you have done so, or what hinders you, and I will try to help you? If your letter is just for me, mark it 'Personal,' and it shall not be printed.

Again wishing you the very happiest year you have ever had, I am, your loving friend,

THE EDITOR OF THE
CORRESPONDENCE.

Carrie and Elsie send pressed flowers—the Editor is much obliged for them. Lulu hopes to get new subscribers for the 'Messenger'—we hope she will be very successful. Alice has only had two birthdays, but she writes very well; we hope her brother will soon be well again. Lena May and her sister have a good record of Sunday-school attendance.

Please remember to write plainly on only one side of the paper, and address all letters for this page, 'Messenger Correspondence,' 'Witness' Office, Montreal.

Parishville, N.Y.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Messenger' for two years, and think it is the best paper I see. We are two miles from the church, and have to walk. We have a small library at Sunday-school. I get a book out every time I go. I think 'Mamie's' letter is very interesting, on account of its description of natural scenery.

IDA ROSE (aged 9).

Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Editor,—I enjoy reading the 'Messenger' very much; it is a good paper, and is widely circulated through Manitoba. I get your paper from my Sunday-school. I was away this summer for three months in the country, and I enjoyed my visit very much, and the time passed altogether too quickly.

MADGE.

Hantsport, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I want to tell you how much I enjoy your paper. I was very much interested in the letter from 'L.S.' I feel as if she was a friend of mine. We have lately adorned our church with a fine pipe organ. Hantsport is a very pretty place, especially in the summer. We have a splendid view from our house.

B. G. R.

Acton.

Dear Editor,—I get the 'Northern Messenger' at Sunday-school, and like it very much, especially the correspondence, and I look to see if I know anybody who writes, and I only knew one.

We are getting electric lights in our town. My brother is writing to his Sunday-school teacher, who has gone away. We have lots of snow here, and it is very cold.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

ALICK (aged 9).

Mansfield.

Mansfield, Ont.

Dear Editor,—My grandma takes the 'Messenger,' and I enjoy reading the correspondence. I belong to the Junior League. We have an organ, and I like playing very much. My mamma and papa read the 'Messenger,' and like it very much. I enclose a bunch of wild mint and shamrock. Please accept them.

ELSIE (aged 10).

Mansfield, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm. We have a large bush, and I enjoy gathering flowers in the summer. We have an organ, and I intend taking music lessons next summer. I have two pets, a dog and a cat. I am going to join the Epworth League. I enclose some of the flowers we have in our garden in Simcoe County.

CARRIE (aged 12).

Fulton Brook.

Dear Editor,—School will soon close now, as Christmas will soon be here. We do not have any school here after Christmas until April. Papa keeps the post-office; the mail was changed here last summer. It is twelve miles from here to the nearest railway, and seven miles from the nearest store. One of my aunts keeps a store eleven miles from here. I spent a week of my summer vacation at my grandpa's.

ESTHER (aged 13).

Broadlands.

Dear Editor,—I saw a letter from Mamie, who lives about eleven miles from here, on the opposite side of the river. My father fishes salmon in summer. My sister is taking music lessons for the organ. I often go out on the ice and fish for trout. There is some fine skating here.

A. G. A. (aged 13).

Souderton, Pa.

Dear Editor,—I have a good teacher. My father is a Mennonite preacher. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New-Year.

JACOB (aged 12).

Keady.

Dear Editor,—I have not missed one Sabbath at Sabbath-school this year, neither has my sister. We enjoy the reading in the 'Messenger' very much.

LENA MAY (aged 6).

Hollands Mille, Que.

Dear Editor,—I attend the Presbyterian Sunday-school, and get the 'Messenger' every Sunday. Mamma and I enjoy reading it very much. I have no brothers or sisters. I sometimes help papa in the store mornings and evenings, and go to school every day. We have a small schoolhouse at the foot of a mountain. We go up to the top to eat our lunch. We have great fun in winter skating on the creeks and lakes, and coasting down hills.

ARTHUR (aged 11).

South-Durham, Que.

Dear Editor,—I see in the 'Messenger' that a little girl in Smithville cannot find any boy or girl that has a birthday like herself. I was born on the same date, February 29th, 1888. I have had only two birthdays, and I must wait till I am sixteen to have another. I live on a farm, and have to walk one mile to the village model school. We

have an orchard. My eldest brother is in the Victoria Hospital, Montreal; he has been ill.

ALICE (aged 10).

Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Editor,—Winnipeg is a very pleasant place. I have two sisters and a brother, and an aunt staying with us. I have been skating every winter for seven years. I take the 'Northern Messenger,' and I like it very much, and enjoy reading the letters and little stories. The reason I wrote this letter was because I like reading letters that other children have written.

V. G.

Tilsonburg.

Dear Editor,—I have a little sister two and a-half; she can talk well, and plays with me. She and I are always glad when your good paper comes. My sister and I listen very attentively while grandpa reads for us. My papa has a nice span of black horses. He does all the ploughing. Grandpa has a span which he drives to market. Grandpa says the paper can come in my name when the new year comes in. I have cousins that take your good paper. They like it well. I live two miles from Tilsonburg; it is a good town.

LOUIS HENRY (aged 7).

St. Albans, Vt.

Dear Editor,—I have not noticed any letters from this part of Vermont. I like to go to school very much, but I like vacation better. I am going to try to get a few subscribers to the 'Messenger' this month if I can.

LULU (aged 12).

Burnstown.

Dear Editor,—My father is a blacksmith. I belong to the mission band; there are about forty belong to it. We have been taking the 'Witness' for twenty years, and the 'Messenger' for fifteen years.

MARY J. (aged 8).

Edgeley, Assa.

Dear Editor,—I have two brothers and three sisters. I go to school. My brother has a little black dog. I live half-a-mile from the Edgeley Farm. It is a cold country.

LELA (aged 10).

Brookfield, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have two sisters and one brother. I go to school every day. I enjoy reading the correspondence. My birthday is on Oct. 15. My little sister is twelve months old.

LOU. M. H. (aged 10).

Port Colborne.

Dear Editor,—I have a pet bird, its name is Margaret, and I have a pet cat. Father is a fruit-grower. I have two sisters. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

ELVA C. B. (aged 10).

Escuminac.

Dear Editor,—I got the 'Messenger' as a present from grandma last Christmas. I like it very much. I have only one little sister. We each have a pet cat. I was seven years old last month. I had a cake with sweeties on it.

AGGIE.

Brandon.

Dear Editor,—We live on a farm a mile and a-half from school, and go to school every day, summer and winter. I have a pony. We have two pet cats and a good dog. We had a pet crow, but we lost him when the cold weather came. I like Manitoba.

ARCHIE (aged 8).

Protestant Home, London, Ont.

Dear Editor,—There are forty-five children in this Home. We keep 45 chickens, 4 ducks, 2 rabbits and 1 white rat.

A kind lady sends us the 'Northern Messenger' and I like to read the letters. My father comes to see me nearly every Sunday. The matron lets me go down town on errands. We all go to church on Sunday. We have Sunday-school in the Home, and some of us go to church in the evening. This is my first letter to you. I will write again.

JAMES Mc. R. (aged 11).

Little Marguerite's Temptation.

(Lucie Dayton Phillips in 'Little Folks' Paper.)

It was New Year's day, and a great many people were coming and going in the Eddington drawing-room, where the grown-up daughters were 'receiving.'

Little Marguerite, the pet and darling of the household, had, to her great delight, been allowed to go down, also, and clad in purest white from throat to heel, looked a perfect vision of childish beauty and innocence.

'You must not give a single bit

the handsome reception-room—all alone, and quite close to a small damask-draped table on which stood a half loaf of white cake, thickly iced; several old time wine glasses, and scattered here and there were grapes and nuts.

It looked very inviting to the little one, and she cast longing glances at the tempting cake. There lay the knife—why not cut for herself a tiny slice?

'True, mamma had said she 'must not touch anything without asking.'

But there was nobody to ask just now.

And if only she did not break or

And when mamma, in her rich gown and delicate laces, came in a short time after, she seemed to know just what had happened; to read the mind of the child's attitude, the hand held behind her, the look of peace—that ever follows temptation withstood—that was written on the thoughtful little face.

She stood a moment at her side in silence, some struggle—some striving for mastery—going on in her own breast.

Then she hurriedly gathered up the wine-bottles and glasses—and put them out of sight.

'No, I'll never put that which stingeth like an adder, and biteth like a serpent, to my neighbor's lips—to anybody's lips again! I knew it was wrong when I consented to offer wine to-day. I ought to have striven for mastery—to overcome temptation, as my little child has just done.'

And Marguerite was taken in a warm, fond clasp, and kissed very tenderly. She was given, too, a generous slice of the frosted cake, a large, lovely bunch of the luscious grapes, and allowed to select what she would from the bon-bon dish.

'I'm so glad I—remembered!' she said, with happy eyes.

The Best Way.

Children who read my lay,
This much I have to say:
Each day and every day,

Do what is right—
Right things in great and small;
Then, though the sky should fall,
Sun, moon, and stars, and all,
You shall have light.

This further I would say:
Be you tempted as you may,
Each day, and every day,
Speak what is true—
True things in great and small;
Then, though the sky should fall,
Sun, moon, and stars, and all,
Heaven would shine through.

Figs, as you see and know,
Do not of thistles grow;
And, though the blossoms blow
White on the tree,
Grapes never, never yet
On the limbs of thorns were set,
So, if you a good would get,
Good you must be.

Life's journey through and through,
Speaking what is just and true,
Doing what is right to do
Unto one and all,
When you work and when you play,
Each day, and every day;
Then peace shall gild your way,
Though the sky should fall.
—Alice Carey.



of trouble, my darling,' said mamma, as she pulled out the broad loops of the snowy sash; 'Claire and Geneva will have their hands full without looking after you.'

'But I can have some of the good things on the pretty tables, can't I mamma?'

'Yes, certainly. But you must not touch anything without asking, remember. You might break one of those costly glasses, or overturn something and spoil the cloth.'

'Oh, I'll remember!' promised the child, dancing away on her dainty satin-shod feet.

But there came a moment when Marguerite found herself alone in

overturn the pretty glasses, mamma would not mind.

She was so hungry, and the grapes, purple and white, looked delicious; and the cake—why she liked that kind best of all, frosted all over, and then covered with grated cocoanut!

She had promised, though.

She had said only a little while ago, 'I'll remember.'

There was a moment's struggle, and then the dimpled hand stretched toward the cake-knife was hastily put behind her, and kept there. Not a finger did she lay upon the good things before her. She had promised, and the promise was kept!

Dorrie's Waiting Time.

(Julia H. Johnson in 'Presbyterian Banner.')

Dorrie Blake had the measles. This was uncomfortable enough, to begin with, but when you hear that this trouble did not come alone, but brought a disappointment with it, you will be sorry for the little girl, I am sure.

'In just one more week it will be vacation, and I was to go to grandma's then, where Cousin Edith is now,' Dorrie explained to the kind doctor, who had found her much cast down, and had said that it wasn't the hardest thing in the world to have the measles, when one had such a good place in which to be sick.

'You shall go in good time,' said the doctor. 'It will be after vacation, but school books may wait, for you must grow quite strong before you begin to study again. The waiting-time will soon pass, little girl.'

Yet it seemed very long to Dorrie, and when grandma wrote that she must not come till she was certain not to bring the measles to Cousin Edith, who was not strong enough to bear any illness just now, it seemed harder still. Then, when little brother Ned came down with the disease, or rather, came out, for the big red spots popped out all over, Dorrie thought she could not bear the long waiting for the good time coming.

'I wouldn't give Edith the measles, mamma,' she said, 'no, not a single one. Why can't I go to grandma's now?'

'If you could have gone before Ned was broken out, it might have been well enough, but you must wait a little longer now.'

'But I wouldn't take any of Ned's measles, mamma. Oh, dear! It seems like years and years to wait.'

'Do you remember, little daughter, how we waited in the big department store one day before you were taken sick?'

'Oh, yes, mamma, while my little own umbrella was covered. It seemed a pretty long time too.'

'Yes, but while we were waiting, and thought we had not much to do somebody was doing something for us, and the next time it rained you were glad of your little own umbrella to take to school. Then, dear, you surely remember the little lost child that came into the room where we were.'

'Yes, mamma, the poor little girl that had lost her mamma. I don't know what she would have done if you hadn't been there. How glad she was when you found her mamma for her.'

'You see, Dorrie, that while we were waiting, there was something for us to do for others, as well as something to have done for ourselves, and the waiting-time wasn't lost. It did not seem long to you, I know, while we were hunting for the mother, watching the gladness of that mother and child when they met again.'

'I guess not, mamma. I most felt as if I had been lost and found, too, I was so glad.'

'Well, Dorrie, let us see what can be done to make this waiting-time easier for you and better for others. Remember that while you are waiting the good time at grandma's is getting ready for you, so the time is not wasted. Then, suppose you see what you can do for others while you wait for your own good time.'

'But I'll give them the measles, if I try to do things for other bodies,' said Dorrie, dolefully.

'There are different ways of doing things, and we'll find a safe way. What would you think of writing some little letters to your friends who are sick too? Ada, Madge, and Florence have the measles, you know, and are not yet well enough to do much. You might make three homes a little brighter by cheery letters.'

Dorrie was delighted with this plan. She could write very well for so small a girl, but not very fast, so the letters, on the dear little sheets, took almost a day to get ready for their pretty envelopes.

When to-morrow came, mamma said: 'Suppose you make some books out of your Sunday-school papers by tying together a number of them with ribbons. I know some children who have no such things who would enjoy such books.'

This, too, was a capital plan, and kept Dorrie happily busy another day. On the evening of that day came three answers to her letters, written by the little girls' mammas, telling how happy Dorrie had made them by writing, and this made the small writer happier still.

'There's a good time coming, mamma,' she cried, 'but this is a good time, too.'

Helping cook in the kitchen, saving her steps by running for her to pantry and store-room, and doing various small errands, made the time pass for another day or two.

When little brother was well enough to be amused by his sister, allowing mamma to do something else, there was plenty for Dorrie to do, you may depend. She did it so busily that she forgot about looking at the clock and wishing that the time would pass.

And so the waiting-time went by, as it was certain to do, but it went happily, because it was not wasted in wishing, but spent in doing. Thus Dorrie learned the wise and helpful lesson that to work for others while waiting for one's own good time, is the very best way to spend the days.

Christmas Thoughts.

(Rev. A. M. Hubley in Presbyterian Banner.)

The inn-keeper stood on his threshold,
The night-shades were gathering low,
When Joseph and Mary approached him,
Their footsteps were weary and slow.

For food and for shelter they pleaded,
The inn-keeper heard their requests;
But his heart was filled with his business,
For his inn was crowded with guests.

'No room in the inn,' he made answer,
'No, no room in the inn to-day,
You must seek from some other quarter
Food and shelter for which you pray.'

The inn-keeper felt some compassion,
Yet with scorning he turned away,
His thoughts were a tumult within him,
His business would brook no delay.

There are merchants, and priests, and princes,
These take my resources to-day;
My servants are all now too busy,
With guests that are able to pay.

These poor, toiling Nazarene peasants,
They require but humble fare;
No doubt there is near by a stable,
The cattle its shelter will share.

God will provide them a resting-place,
And though it may be with the kine,
Their lowly abode will be honored
With guests of a lordlier line.

The stable will echo with music,
Heavenly strains, such as angels sing,
And wise men, led by the star of peace,
Will gladly serve Jesus our King.



White Shoes and White Dress.

Miss Willard always enjoyed telling this true experience of one of the leaders in the Temperance Crusade:

One morning during the crusade, a drunkard's wife came to my door. She carried in her arms a baby six weeks old. Her pale pinched face was sad to see, and she told me this sorrowful story: 'My husband is drinking himself to death; he is lost to all human feeling; our rent is unpaid, and we are liable to be put out into the street; and there is no food in the house for me and the children. He has a good trade, but his earnings all go into the saloon on the corner near us; he is becoming more and more brutal and abusive. We seem to be on the verge of ruin. How can I, feeble as I am, with a babe in my arms, earn bread for myself and the children?'

Quick as thought the question came to me, and I asked it: 'Why not try to have that husband of yours converted?'

But she answered hopelessly, 'Oh, there's no hope of such a thing. He cares for nothing but strong drink.'

'I'll come and see him this afternoon,' I said.

'He'll insult you,' she replied.

'No matter,' said I; 'my Saviour was insulted, and the servant is not above his Lord.'

That very afternoon I called at the little tenement house. The husband was at work at his trade in a back room, and his little girl was sent to tell him that a lady wished to see him. The child, however, soon returned with the message: 'My father says he won't see anyone.'

But I sent him a message proving that I was indeed in earnest. I said, 'Go back and tell your father that a lady wishes to see him on very important business, and she must see him if she has to stay till after supper.'

I knew very well that there was nothing in the house to eat. A moment afterward a poor, bloated, besotted wreck of a man stood before me.

'What do you want?' he demanded as he came shuffling into the room.

'Please be seated and look at this paper,' I answered, pointing to a vacant chair at the end of the table where I was sitting and handing a printed pledge to him.

He read it slowly, and then throwing it down on the table, broke out violently:

'Do you think I am a fool? I drink when I please and let it alone when I please. I'm not going to sign away my personal liberty.'

'Do you think you can stop drinking?'

'Yes, I could if I wanted to.'

'On the contrary, I think you're a slave to the rum-shop down on the corner.'

'No, I ain't any such thing.'

'I think, too, that you love the saloon-keeper's daughter better than you do your own little girl.'

'No, I don't, either.'

'Well, let us see about that. When I passed the shop-keeper's house I saw his little girl coming down the steps, and she had on white shoes and a white dress, and a blue sash. Your money helped to buy them. I come here, and your little girl, more beautiful than she, has on a faded, ragged dress, and her feet are bare.'

'That's so, madam.'

'And you love the saloon-keeper's wife better than you love your own wife.'

'Never, no never!'

'When I passed the saloon-keeper's house I saw his wife come out with a little girl, and she was dressed in silk and laces, and a carriage waited for her. Your money helped to buy the silks and the laces and the horses and the carriage. I come here and find your wife in a faded calico gown, doing her own work; if she goes anywhere she must walk.'

'You speak the truth, madam.'

'You love the saloon-keeper better than you love yourself. You say you can keep from drinking if you choose; but you helped the saloon-keeper to build himself a fine brick house, and you live in this poor, tumble-down old house yourself.'

'I never saw it in that light before.' Then, holding out his hand, that shook like an aspen leaf, he continued, 'You speak the truth, madam—I am a slave. Do you see that hand? I've got a piece of work to finish, and I must have a mug of beer to steady my nerves or I cannot do it; but tomorrow, if you'll call, I'll sign the pledge.'

'That's a temptation of the devil; I did not ask you to sign the pledge; you are a slave, and cannot help it; but I do want to tell you this: There is one who can break your chains and set you free.'

Old Hats and New.

A noted temperance lecturer once visited the shop of a hatter and asked him to give some money to the local society. The shop-keeper coldly replied that he had no interest in it, and then it was that the temperance man began to instruct him, after the Socratic method of question and answer.

'I am sorry to hear that,' he said, 'for it shows me that you are not acquainted with your own business.'

'If you are more familiar with my business than I am,' said the man with some spirit, 'I shall be happy to take lessons of you.'

'Well,' said the lecturer, 'you deal in hats, and intend to make a little money on every hat you sell?'

'Yes.'

'All that sends customers to your shop, and increases their ability to buy, promotes your interest, doesn't it?'

'Certainly.'

'All that makes men content to wear old, worn-out hats does your craft an injury?'

'Yes.'

'Well, sir, of you and I were to walk out along the wharves and through the streets and lanes of this city, we should see scores of men wearing on their heads old, miserable, slouched hats which ought years ago to have been thrown into the fire. Now, why don't those men come at once and buy of you?'

'That is not a difficult question to answer,' said the shop-keeper. 'They are too poor to buy hats.'

'What has more influence than liquor in emptying their pockets, and not only that, but injuring their self-respect to such an extent that they are willing to wear old clothes?'

'Nothing,' said the man hastily. 'Here is some money for your cause. You have got the better of me there!—Wellspring.'

Faced Him.

A minister newly settled in Glasgow, Scotland, determined to visit every person in his parish. He began his rounds, and succeeded in finishing the entire list—with a single exception.

Up four flights of stairs, in a poor tene-

ment house, lived, or hoveled, an intemperate man who was so repulsive and savage that he dared not meet him. The minister's friends had warned him not to call there, for fear of personal harm. The wretch had driven his family away. Nobody could live with him, and he was best let alone. He was a 'beast.' This was confirmed by the minister's own impressions the few times he had seen the drunkard, and he shunned him.

Still, the good man could not help feeling ashamed of his fears, and the shame grew upon him the more he thought of the matter.

At last, one splendid morning, rising after a perfect night's rest, full of vigor and spiritual courage, he said to himself, 'Now is my time to go to Piper's alley and see Tim Burke. I'm just in the mood.'

He went straight to the place, climbed through the dirty entries, and knocked at the man's door. He listened, and then knocked again—and soon after again. The drunkard must be in at this hour, if ever, and he resolved not to lose his errand.

Finally, he lifted the latch. There was no lock, and the door slowly opened. Before him, crouched over the fire-place, he saw Tim Burke, the 'beast.'

Wild and dangerous enough the creature looked, in his filth and rags, and with his glaring eyes.

'Who be you?' That was his first greeting to his visitor.

'I am a minister.'

Minister! What d'you want?

'I came to see you!'

'Well, look at me, then,' and the man rose to his feet and came forward.

'Ain't I a beauty, eh?' stepping nearer and nearer. The minister expected an attack, and was prepared for it.

'Have you looked enough?' said the drunkard, approaching so close that his visitor caught his foul breath. 'Now, I'll tell ye what I'm goin' to do. I'm goin' to kick ye downstairs!'

'Hold on, hold on! Not now!' said the minister. 'If you kick me downstairs, I'll have to come all the way up again. I've got a call to make on the next floor. Wait till I come back, and then if you conclude to kick the minister who wanted to make you a friendly visit, why, I shall be at your service.'

'Well, you are a cool one,' muttered the drunkard, and he went and sat down again.

After making his call, the minister returned, and presented himself according to promise; but he found the man not at all disposed to kick him now. He had evidently been thinking.

'Sit down,' said he; and the minister sat down and talked with him like a tender brother; and when he spoke to him of his wife and children, the tears began to roll down the poor drunkard's cheeks. 'Oh, I'm a God-forsaken wretch, beyond mercy!' he groaned. But the minister pointed him to Christ, and knelt and prayed that the fallen soul might have strength and grace to rise again.

The good man followed up his prayer with persistent kindness, and faithfully stood by Tim Burke till he saw him re-united to his family, and established in honest employment, a sober, right-minded, church-going man.

Ever afterwards, when inclined to be afraid of a repulsive duty, it was enough for the minister to remember that day when he 'rescued the perishing.'—Youth's Companion.

It is said that 1,500 children under fourteen years of age were arrested in London for drunkenness in one year.



LESSON II.—JAN. 8.

Christ's First Disciples.

John i., 35-46. Memory verses, 35-37. Read whole chapter.

Golden Text.

'Behold the Lamb of God.'—John i., 36.

Home Readings.

- M. John i., 35-42.—Christ's first disciples.
 T. John i., 43-51.—Christ first disciples.
 W. Matt. iv., 18-25.—The second call.
 T. Luke ix., 18-26.—True discipleship.
 F. Matt. v., 13-20.—Teaching the disciples.
 S. John xv., 12-21.—Friends of Jesus.
 S. Matt. xix., 23-30.—Reward.

The Story.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, announced himself as 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.' John baptised with water those who came to him at the Jordan, promising that the coming One should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

One day, as John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples, they saw Jesus walking by, and John said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples understood that this was the Saviour of whom John had been preaching, and they walked after Jesus. Then our Lord turned and asked them what they were seeking 'Master, where dwellest thou?' they asked. 'Come and see,' was his kind reply. They went to his humble dwelling and stayed with him the rest of that day.

These two disciples were Andrew and John. Andrew went at once to find his brother Simon, and, telling him that they had found the Messiah, he brought him to Jesus. When Jesus looked on Simon, he saw his heart, and knew what he would become. 'Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Cephas, a rock.'

The next day Jesus went into Galilee, and, finding Philip, bade him 'Follow me.' Philip went joyfully to find Nathaniel, saying, 'We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' Nathaniel wondered if any good thing could come out of Nazareth, but Philip, without stopping to argue, entreated him to 'Come and see.' Nathaniel went to see Jesus, and a few words from the Saviour quickly brought from Nathaniel the joyful acknowledgment, 'Thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.'

The Bible Class.

'Beginning'—Gen. i., 1; Luke xxiv., 27; John viii., 44.

'Life'—Gen. ii., 7; vii., 22; I. Cor. xv., 16-22, 45-50, 54; Matt. vii., 14; Mark x., 29, 30; John iii., 36.

'Light'—Gen. i., 3, 4; Psa. xxvii., 1; Matt. iv., 16; v., 14; John iii., 19; viii., 12; II. Cor. iv., 6; I. John i., 5; ii., 9; Eph. v., 14; Rev. xxi., 23, 24.

'Witness'—Ex. xxiii., 1; Prov. xix., 5; Isa. xlii., 12; Acts i., 11; Heb. xii., 1; I. John v., 10; Matt. xxiv., 14.

'The Lamb'—Ex. xii., 3-13; Lev. xiv., 10-13, 20; Isa. liii., 7; I. Pet. i., 19; Rev. v., 12; vii., 14, 17.

'Where dwellest thou?'—Ex. xxix., 45; Isa. lvii., 15; Zech. ii., 10; Eph. iii., 17; Col. i., 19; John xiv., 17; Rom. viii., 9; I. John iv., 16; Luke xix., 5.

'Abode with him'—Psa. xv., 1; xcl., 1; John xv., 4-10; I. John ii., 6.

'Brother'—Gen. iv., 9, 10; ix., 6; Lev. xxv., 35, 36; Matt. v., 24; xviii., 15; Mark iii., 35; Rom. xiv., 21; I. Cor. viii., 13; I. John iv., 20.

'Follow me'—Ex. xiii., 21; John x., 4; Eph. v., 1; Matt. iv., 20; viii., 19; Luke ix., 23; xxii., 54.

Suggestions.

The references under the title 'Bible class' are intended to be looked up by all, as they throw new light on the lesson, and illustrate the different thoughts. They are only a few out of many; the student should jot down any other reference he thinks fitting. It

is a good plan to have a large, plain bible, with good type, for study. Such a book could be purchased for about sixty cents at the Bible House, Phillips square, Montreal. This book may have no references or 'helps' of any kind, but you can soon make its margins very helpful and interesting by putting in references and notes with a fine pen. This is a most fascinating form of bible study, and will fix the Scripture in our minds in a way that nothing else could. The references that will be given every week are only suggestions. You may not use them all, but they may suggest others to your mind. Be sure to verify every reference before using it, as it is very difficult to have them all correct when there are a great many figures. Each lesson can be well illustrated by stories from other parts of the bible, and the connecting links can be shown quite plainly.

Read the chapter carefully through. Emphasize the work of John the Baptist; he was 'sent from God,' and he perfectly fulfilled his mission; therefore, he was a great success, though the world might call his short life a failure. Explain the significance of the title 'Lamb of God.' The lamb slain for the Passover was a type of Christ, also the lambs slain for the sin-offering and atonement. God chose this way of keeping in remembrance that the Messiah was coming to atone for their sins by the sacrifice of his own life-blood.

Jesus invited the disciples to his dwelling-place, and there they spent the two remaining hours of the day. What happy hours those must have been for the two inquirers! How many questions they must have asked! How they must have drunk in the words and looks of him who was to be henceforth their Lord and Master. With what joyous alacrity did they leave all to follow him, and with what glad sincerity did they hasten to tell their own brothers the wonderful news and brought them to Jesus.

Central Thought.

'Follow me.'

This was the command our Lord Jesus Christ gave to his first disciples. This is the command he gives to each of his young disciples to-day.

'Follow me.'

What does it mean to follow Jesus? What did it mean to those men who first left all their hopes of earthly success to follow Jesus? We may think that it was easier for them to follow because they could see him and walk about with him. They could see him as a man. We cannot see him, but we know him as God. So that it is really easier for us to follow him that it was for them.

What made them leave their business and their chance of becoming rich, to follow Jesus, who was so poor? They followed him and obeyed him because they loved him, and believed in him.

God often calls men and women to leave all, all their business, all their pleasures, all their earthly cares, and follow him. Often he calls them to follow him out into the dark lands to heathenism, to carry the light of his love and the gladness of his salvation.

Some men are like the first disciples. They immediately leave all to follow Jesus. Immediately, without a moment's doubt or hesitation.

Others wait a while and consider all they must lose, if they follow. They must lose their chance of becoming rich. They must lose their chance of an idle, comfortable life. They must be willing to follow Jesus through all the trials and discomforts which he bore for us. They say they cannot do all this for Jesus. They are not loving enough to be faithful. They are not brave enough to obey.

What kind of a follower will you be, brave, and loving, or cowardly and disobedient?

Questions.

1. What was John's testimony of Jesus?
2. Why was Jesus called the Lamb of God?
3. What did Jesus first ask his disciples?
4. What invitation did he give them?
5. What great thing did Andrew do?
6. What did Jesus say to Philip?
7. Whom did Philip bring to Jesus?

Practical Points.

(By A. H. Cameron.)

Christ's first disciples.—John i., 35-46. Looking upon Jesus, John foresaw the atoning sacrifice for sin. When invited to

the gospel feast, who can resist saying, 'O, Lamb of God, I come.' (Verses 35, 36.) They who follow Jesus as little children will receive richer blessings than they ever dreamed of. (Verses 37-39.) Love to Christ always begets love to our neighbor. (Verses 40, 41. I. John iv., 20.) Peter showed his rock-like character as long as he clung to the Rock of Ages. (Verse 42, Acts iv., 13.) When Jesus says 'Follow me,' our hearts should respond, 'Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.' (Verses 43, 44.) Jesus was despised and misjudged because of his lowly extraction, yet he was and is the noble son of heaven's king. (Verses 45, 46.)

The Victoria Cross.

(M. H. P. in 'Sunday-school Times'.)

Rudyard Kipling tells, in a magazine article, some interesting facts about the 'Winning of the Victoria Cross,' the reward given by the English Government for acts of special bravery by men in the army or navy. He says that he has talked with a number of those who have received it, and that nearly every one said that he simply saw something that ought to be done very quickly, and did it, with no thought in his mind of honor or reward to follow. The peril and possible rescue, the sudden emergency and the one way to meet it, the onward step that could be taken one moment, but, if not taken then, would be lost the next moment,—such opportunities were seized instantly by the brave heroes who wear the Victoria Cross.

Thinking on these things, the question arose whether we Christian men and women, servants of Christ Jesus, do not need more of his same spirit in our life and work. Not so much in the great crises that come but rarely to us, and which more resemble the sudden emergencies of the soldier's life, as in the less conspicuous opportunities which are ours in the home, in Sunday-school, in whatever occupies us as the chief business of our lives.

You sit before your Sunday-school class of wide-awake, mischievous boys. They are quick to turn anything and every thing into fun. You teach them the lesson, interesting them by anecdote and illustration, holding their attention fairly well, for they love you, and like to please you by listening to what you say. You make no direct appeal to them to become Christians, partly because it is not easy for you to speak of personal religion, and also because you doubt whether such appeal would be received as you would wish. You dread a laugh as the response to any such effort.

One day a chance remark by a member of the class opens wide a door for you to enter, and speak directly to the hearts and consciences of those boys. There is your opportunity. A moment, and the door will be closed by the lively talk which is all ready to follow the remark. Will you quickly enter in, overcoming your natural hesitation, and say the word of warning or of invitation which may reach and win those young souls? It may be an act of true heroism to do it, but it will be something done by a soldier for his king.

It is far more comfortable to sit at home on some rainy evening, when there is a prayer meeting at your own church, and when, if you go, you are liable to be called upon to take part in the service, something which is never easy to you. You are not at all in the mood to do that; you are tired, and not in very great sympathy with the subject of the evening. Will you straightway rise, putting aside all these suggestions of ease and comfort, and go to that little gathering of Christ's people, ready to say a word for him if he gives it to you?

Perhaps there is not much real heroism in such an act, yet we may surely believe that our Lord recognizes something akin to it in every resolute effort to overcome the sins which do 'so easily beset us' on our way to heaven.

Our path may be in very humble, quiet places, and our work monotonous to weariness, with little opportunity for special service of any kind. 'Patient continuance in well doing' may be our highest duty. Yet, keeping eye and heart intently open for what may be God's call to us for some self-denying, out standing service, we shall find a blessing in quickly obeying the call, at any cost to self and selfish ease.

HOUSEHOLD.

Air and Light in Bedrooms.

Air and light in bedrooms are essential to health. Yet a great many people seem to be of the opinion that both should be excluded as much as possible, especially during all the hours of sleep. Night air is considered by some as quite unwholesome, yet night air is all we have at night to breathe.

If our bedrooms were constructed to sleep in, the questions involved as to light and air would be much easier of solution than they are. There would be in the architectural plan of the bedroom a place for the bed, out of draughts, and so that the eyes could not open directly on a window. The free admission of air and light would be provided for, so that if one were compelled to occupy the bed all day no inconvenience would follow to the eyes or the lungs; but as average houses are built the bedrooms are as suitable for sitting-rooms as for sleeping-rooms, and in many bedrooms there is no suitable place for a bed.

But, however domestic architecture may be at fault, the ingenious housekeeper will contrive a way of making the best of her advantages and of turning disadvantages to profit. Draughts of air may be kept from the sleeper by curtains properly disposed about the bed, and screens may be so placed with respect to windows so as to protect the eyes from the light without excluding the air. If light in the room interferes with sleep, a thin silk handkerchief of some dark tint tied over the eyes will shield them from the light and not interfere with the comfort of the sleeper. This last method was tried by a lady who found it impossible to sleep after the dawning of the day. To prevent waking at this hour, she was accustomed to close her shutters tightly before going to sleep. This, of course, excluded air as well as light, and her sleep was heavy and unrefreshing. A thin, dark silk bandage over her eyes, sufficed to protect them from the light, and permitted her to keep her shutters wide open. Then her sleep was refreshing.

It is difficult to have too much air and sunshine in bedrooms when the beds are tenantless. The beds should be opened freely, and so left till thoroughly aired. It is not the neat housekeeper who has all her beds made as soon as the sleepers are out of them. Robes worn at night should be hung up during the day where the air can have free access to them; not folded and laid under the pillow or in a case made for the purpose. Such part of 'our dead selves' as we leave absorbed in the bed-clothes and in garments worn during sleep, air and sunshine will, if permitted, remove to a great extent, and give us to lie down at night to pleasant dreams. — N. Y. 'Christian Advocate.'

The Mother's Power.

Many a man of world-wide renown looks back to some uneducated but sweet-hearted, loving woman as the one who gave him the most real aid and incentive to become good. In quiet, secluded homes, under the training of hands made skilful by loving sympathy, have grown many human souls, developed through love for grand places of responsibility. So the mother who to-day is shut out from great libraries, who cannot obtain the latest scientific books on child-culture, need not despair, for the little, loving, living child is hers to study, and the child-heart will respond to her loving guidance, the aspirations be led heavenwards by her prayers and sweet bedtime stories, and the strongest bonds to right living be woven by the sweet, unselfish mother-love that works not for to-day but for all time.—Dr. Mary Wood-Allen.

Cooking and Carving a Ham.

This is 'The Ladies' Home Ideal' rule for cooking and carving a ham: Soak for a day in tepid water, then place in a large saucepan with sufficient water to cover it. Add two blades of mace, half a dozen cloves, five long peppers, and three bay leaves. Simmer gently, allowing twenty minutes for every pound. When cooked, remove the pan from the fire and leave the meat in it until cold. Take up the ham, skin it, brush over with beaten egg, sprinkle brown bread-crumbs over, and set in a moderate oven to brown. Baste with the following mixture: Dissolve a tablespoonful of mustard in a gill of vinegar; add to this half a pound of pow-

dered ginger and the same quantity of powdered cloves. When brown, take up and leave until cold. If the ham is to be served whole at the table, it should be trimmed neatly, the end of the bone covered with a paper ruffle, and the dish garnished with radishes, olives and parsley. The thickest end of the ham should be at the further side of the platter. With a very sharp knife make an incision through the thickest part a little way from the smaller end. Shave off in very thin slices, cutting toward the larger end, and down to the bone at every slice. Each slice should have a portion of the fat with the crisp crust.

Poor Girls.

The poorest girls in the world are those not taught to work. There are thousands of them. Rich parents have petted them, and they have been taught to despise labor and to depend upon others for a living, and are perfectly helpless. The most forlorn women belong to this class. It is the duty of parents to protect their daughters from this deplorable condition. They do them a great wrong if they neglect it. Every daughter should be taught to earn her own living. The rich as well as the poor require this training. The wheel of fortune rolls swiftly around; the rich are likely to become poor, and the poor rich. Skill added to labor is no disadvantage to the rich, and is indispensable to the poor. Well-to-do parents must educate their daughters to work. No reform is more imperative than this.—'Gentlewoman.'

Neatness.

The question of dress should be important to every woman. One does not need to dress expensively, but the garments should be carefully selected and planned, and neatly made. The hair should be arranged becomingly always. There are foolish women who think very little of their home toilet so long as no one comes; but if there should be unexpected callers, both guest and hostess feel uncomfortable. The housewife should brush her hair nicely upon arising in the morning, and put on a clean dress, clean apron and fresh necktie; then she will be neat and tidy when her friends appear, even though not dressed up, and there will be no annoyance. There is no one who would enjoy seeing us look nicely more than the folks at home, and their opinion should be of greater importance than anyone else's.—Rhoda Thayer.

Quick Breakfast.

An economy of time in preparing breakfast may be effected by doing as much of the work as is practical on the evening before. The table can be neatly set and covered with a clean linen cloth, to protect the dishes from the dust, the coffee can be

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ground, mixed with egg, and placed in the urn, the meat sliced and laid in the frying-pan, ready to cook, and the potatoes ready. Delicious and healthful pancakes can be made of graham flour, raised over night, as you do for buckwheat cakes. This, with the addition of fruit, or of apple-pie or mince pie, warmed, provides a hearty breakfast with very little labor. Indeed, it almost seems to get itself, a fact which will be appreciated by the tired mother, with little ones to dress or get ready for school.—'Minneapolis Housekeeper.'

Messenger Growth.

Thanks to our many friends, the 'Messenger' subscriptions are pouring in, and the circulation continues to grow rapidly. Last week's receipts were about 25 percent in advance of the receipts of the same week last year. This is the best time to work up clubs. Study the Premium List carefully, then get to work.

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